

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1 – 8 (withdrawn)

9. (currently amended) A tire handling and tread belt manipulator mechanism comprises:
- a pair of movable manipulator arms;
 - ~~a pair of tire grippers attached to the ends of the manipulator arms;~~
 - a pair of tread belt support arms, one being rotatably mounted ~~attached above the~~
~~tire grippers on each manipulator arm;~~
 - ~~a hydraulic means to move the manipulator arms.~~
10. (previously presented) The tire handling and tread belt manipulator mechanism of claim 9 further comprises:
- a pair of tread belt end blocks, one end block being attached to the end of the tread belt support arm.
11. (previously presented) The tire handling and tread belt manipulator mechanism of claim 10 further comprises:
- at least two protruding rods or blocks spaced on each support arm.
12. (previously presented) The tire handling and tread belt manipulator mechanism of claim 9 wherein each tread belt support arm has one or more telescoping slidable extension sections.
13. (new) The tire handling and tread belt manipulator mechanism of claim 9 wherein the manipulator arms are connected to a rotatable support member.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.